

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TRIEST 00046 191304Z
ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TRIESTE 0046
E.O.: 11652; GDS
TAGS: PINT, IT
SUBJ: LEFT PSI/ALLIANCE TAKES OVER TRIESTE
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REF: TRIESTE 0032

1. IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS FEBRUARY 18, THE SOCIALISTS (PSI) AND COMMUNISTS (PCI) APPARENTLY PUT TOGETHER A PRE-CARIOUS PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT BY DEFAULT. THE DC AND MSI VOTED AGAINST; THE OTHER PARTIES ABSTAINED. THE SOCIALISTS HAVE THREE AND THE COMMUNISTS NINE FOR A TOTAL OF TWELVE OUT OF THE THIRTY PROVINCIAL SEATS. REPORTEDLY, THE PRO-VISIONAL PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT SLOTS WILL GO TO THE SOCIALISTS.
2. TRIESTE NOW JOINS VENICE AS THE SECOND PROVINCE (OUT

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OF ELEVEN) IN THE VENETO/FRIULI-VENEZIA GIULIA REGIONS GOVERNED BY A LEFT ALLIANCE. ROVIGO HAD A SIMILAY ARRANGEMENT FOR A TIME BUT THE INCONCLUSIVE 1975 ELECTIONS LED TO A STALEMATE. EARLY PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS HAVE BEEN CALLED FOR ROVIGO ON APRIL 17; THESE ELECTIONS FOLLOWED BY TRIESTE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS LATER THIS YEAR AND FRIULI REGIONAL ELECTIONS NEXT YEAR WILL BE AMONG THE FIRST LOCAL ELECTION CONTESTS SINCE THE 1976 NATIONAL ELECTIONS.
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3. ALTHOUGH THE SOCIALISTS AND THE COMMUNISTS ARE HEAVILY OUTNUMBERED IN THE TRIESTE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL (16 OUT OF 60 SEATS), SUCCESS AT PROVINCIAL LEVEL MAY ENCOURAGE THEM AND OTHERS TO TRY FOR A SIMILAY SOLUTION IN TRIESTE CITY HALL. THAT MAY PROVE A BIT MORE DIFFICULT SINCE TRIESTE IS RUN BY THE POPULAR AND ABLE MAYOR SPACCINI WHO HAS BEEN AROUND FOR A WHILE AND LIKES HIS JOB. HOWEVER, DC LOCAL LEADERS TELL

US THAT OSIMO HAS TAKEN ITS TOLL, DAMAGED THE DC, AND LEFT SCARS WHICH WILL NOT HEAL COMPLETELY FOR SOME TIME.

4. CONTINUING ERRATIC PSI BEHAVIOR CAN BE EXPECTED. SOME OF THE DIFFICULTY STEMS FROM THE DC'S CONTINUING HIGH-HANDED AND CAVALIER TREATMENT OF THE SOCIALISTS. MOST OF IT IS DUE

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TO THE PSI'S CONVICTION THAT THE "HISTORIC COMPROMISE" IS IMMINENT AND IT IS DOING WHAT IT CAN TO DRIVE A WEDGE BETWEEN THE DC AND THE PCI. MOST STRIKING, HOWEVER, IS THE BEHAVIOR OF THE SMALLER LAY PARTIES, PARTICULARLY THE LIBERALS (PLI), WHOSE DISENCHANTMENT WITH THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS HAVE PUSHED THEM TO ABET THE AMBITIONS OF THE COMMUNISTS -- A PARTY THEY HAVE FOUGHT TOOTH AND NAIL THROUGHOUT THE POST-WAR PERIOD. MOEN.

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